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How to Use This Guide

This guide offers step-by-step instructions designed to assist medium and large businesses, governments, and other organizations establish a waste reduction program. Although not specifically designed for smaller companies, these firms also might find the guide useful. While employees at all levels can profit from this guide, the information that follows is directed toward members of the waste reduction team, a group of employees charged with planning and implementing the program.

The guide presents an overview on developing and implementing a waste reduction program, followed by a series of worksheets designed to help the team conduct a waste assessment and devise a program tailored for its company's specific goals. The worksheets lead the team through a set of calculations to estimate the types and amounts of waste generated by the company, identify potential waste reduction options, and determine which options will work in their facility. Teams in large companies with several departments might find it necessary to copy some of the worksheets so that information can be recorded for each department. In addition, teams can complete only those worksheets that are applicable to their operations or appropriate for their waste reduction program.

Appendix A lists a number of specific waste reduction measures that can be implemented in the workplace. You might want to scan this list before reading the remainder of the guide to get a better sense of the range of waste reduction options that can be implemented. This list, while fairly comprehensive, also can serve as a springboard for generating additional ideas tailored specifically for your company.

It should be noted that while this guide discusses a range of approaches to reducing waste in the workplace, in-depth discussions on composting and recycling are beyond the scope of this guide. Many publications have been developed on these topics, however. Contact EPA's RCRA Hotline at 800424-9346 to obtain further information or documents on waste prevention, recycling, composting, and purchasing recycled materials.